



Hawthorn Parish Council

Community Engagement Policy



Approved June 2017

Reviewed and approved June 2022

1 Introduction

Community Engagement “is about giving local people a voice and involving them in the decisions that affect them and their community. It is about the development of relationships and clear communication to deliver better services and projects.”

Hawthorn Parish Council places the community at the centre and heart of everything it does. Two-way communication is seen as of paramount importance and the Parish Council has built its Community Engagement Policy around this.

Moreover Hawthorn has now created an ‘information area’ on the village green adjacent to the Community Centre. We have installed new solar powered noticeboards and a new information lectern surrounded by new seating and planting tubs. This followed a survey of all residents and successful grant applications.

2 Mission Statement

'To promote Hawthorn as a great place to live and visit.'

2.1 Aims

In order that the Parish Council can achieve its vision its aims are to :-

- be transparent
- be informative on all village matters and by all appropriate means
- be proactive with agreed short- and longer-term goals
- understand the needs of residents, and seek to address these through the powers and resources available
- give value for money for the services and facilities provided
- seek external funding wherever possible to extend the scope of its activities in the interest of the community and community assets
- preserve open spaces for the enjoyment of all
- encourage the preservation, promotion and conservation of the natural environment
- promote the saving of energy and use resources in a manner which aims to achieve the best economic value
- encourage all to participate in activities beneficial to the community.

2.2 Objectives

To ensure Hawthorn Parish Council:-

- Communicates on a regular basis with its residents and visitors
- Employs up to date methods of communication
- Has a commitment to listening to the views of its residents and visitors
- Consults on a regular basis with its residents and visitors
- Reaches out to the hard to reach groups in Hawthorn
- Ensure the parish council’s long term aims and plans are made in consultation with its local community

3 Consulting the local community

3.1 General Methods

Hawthorn Parish Council will continue its regular practices of:-

- Ensuring all notices of meetings and key council communications are placed on the noticeboards
- Allowing a 10 minutes public participation during every monthly meeting.
- Encouraging residents to attend the Annual Parish Meeting.
- Producing an Annual Report each year
- Constant updating of the web site and noticeboards
- Delivery of regular newsletter to every household in the parish
- Delivery of the electronic newsletter the Hawthorn Round Up on a monthly basis and additional as required
- Pro-actively delivering a flyer/consultation notice to household affected by contentious issues.
- Setting up of appropriate groups and co-opting members of the public to undertake specific projects to improve the area.
- Regular consultation / surveys with residents

3.2 Reaching the hard to reach groups

The Council uses both the printed word and the internet to communicate:

- The newsletter is delivered to every household in the village
- All information is available on the website
- The electronic newsletter has direct links to information, events etc.
- Members of the Council have a long history of living in the Parish and have been involved in social activities where they speak to parishioners on an informal basis.
- Various competitions and events aimed at the different sections of the community

3.3 The Role of Councillors and Officers

HPC recognises the value and importance of engaging with the local community directly through members and Officers and will continue to be actively approachable and listen to all when out and about in the community.

4 The Councils short, medium and long term aims.

4.1 Short term:

- Continued use and updating of all current forms of communication
- Regular reviews of feedback by agenda items at Council meetings
- Prompt response to any communications received from the public especially where the aspirations cannot be achieved.

4.2 Medium Term:

- Looking for hard to reach groups and a means of communicating with them i.e. disabled and elderly housebound people.
- Better communication with young people

4.3 Long Term:

- Improving the Noticeboards and providing new information boards NOW achieved
- This policy should be reviewed during the lifetime of each council – effectively on a 4-yearly basis
- The council must keep up to date with evolving methods of communication.

Signed

Chairman

Date